



Russian Tsardom

An introduction to terms
and history

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Terms

- **Tsar:**

the Slavic word for "Emperor" or "King." It comes from the word "Caesar" in the Latin language. A Russian tsar was an absolute monarch, meaning he could make decisions without the input of others.

Synonyms:

Absolute monarch, autocrat, despot

Russian Examples:

Tsar Ivan IV = first Russian tsar

Tsar Nicholas II = last Russian tsar

Current examples:

Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe) – prevents opponents from voting; arrested and tortured those who oppose his regime so that he can stay in power.

Raul Castro (Cuba) – appointed by his brother, Fidel who was in power since 1959.



Terms

- **Autocracy:**

a system of government in which one person, or a small group of people, holds absolute power. Unlike democracy, this person is not elected by the people (or at least not in a fair and free election).

Synonyms:

Despotic, tyrannical, dictatorial, totalitarian

Russian Example:

Tsarist Russia was an autocratic government; each tsar had complete power to make all of the decisions.

Current Examples:

North Korea (Kim Jong Un), Saudi Arabia (King Salman), Uzbekistan (Islam Karimov), Belarus (Alexander Lukashenko), Zimbabwe, Bahrain, etc.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3796116/Putin-s-party-sweeps-victory-Russian-elections-amid-evidence-vote-rigging-CCTV-catching-one-woman-stuffing-multiple-vote-slips-ballot-box.html>

Terms

Imperialism:

A policy or strategy to extend a country's power to another region or country through diplomacy or military force.

Synonyms:

Colonization, expansion, "manifest destiny"

Russian Example:

Russian expanded under Tsarist leadership the size of the Netherlands each year from the 1400s to the 1700s. As it grew, it incorporated tribes and ethnic groups into its lands and asserted rule over them.

Other Examples:

Great Britain: India, South Africa, Jamaica

Spain: Latin and South America

Netherlands: Indonesia, Suriname



Terms

- **Nobility:**

The group of people in a country who are members of the highest social class just below the rank of royalty. They possess privileges in society. Membership in the nobility is hereditary. Historically in Russia, only nobility could own land and they were members of the Russian government.

Synonyms:

Aristocracy, upper class, high society

International Examples:

In Islamic societies, those who can trace their heritage to Mohammed are considered members of the nobility.



Terms

- **Serfs:**

Un-free peasants in the Russian empire, they served the nobility by working their land. They were bound to the land. Serfdom lasted from the 11th century to 1861.

Synonyms:

Servant, laborer, slave

Examples:

Feudalism in Europe saw the practice of tying peasants to the land. This practice in Russia lasted the longest and saw the largest number of serfs. There were 23 million serfs in 1861 when the practice was abolished.

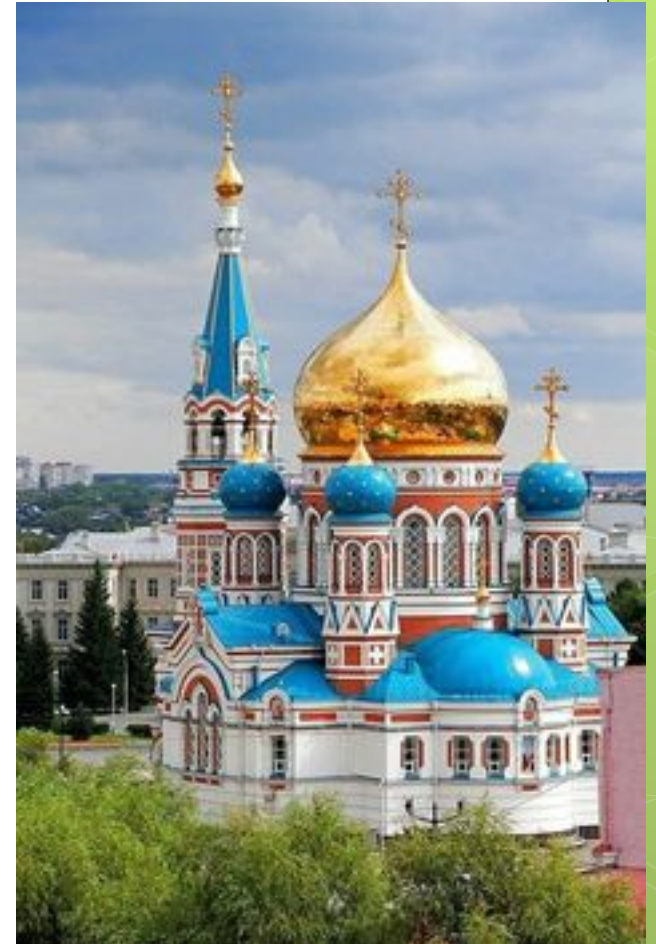


Terms

● Orthodox Church:

The second largest Christian church and one of the oldest religions in the world. The Orthodox Church teaches that it is the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church" established by Jesus in his great commission to the apostles (the twelve disciples).

In Russia, the church was one of the most important pillars of the autocracy and it protected and supported the Tsar. The Tsar was head of the church and the people believed s/he was appointed by God to lead the church and the country. If anyone insulted the Tsar, then it was an insult to the church.



History

- **Kievan Rus'** – the first East Slavic state (800AD)
- Princely states formed along Dnieper River
- Orthodox Church was state religion
- Mongol invasion (1223AD)

History

- ◉ **Rise of Moscow (1240AD)**
 - ◉ Grand Princes cooperated with Mongols
 - ◉ Became seat of Orthodox Church
 - ◉ Russians defeated Mongols
 - ◉ Ivan III "the Great"
 - ◉ Conquered territories
 - ◉ Opposed Catholicism

History

- **Tsardom** (mid-1500s – early 1700s)
 - Ivan IV “the Terrible”
 - First tsar of Russia
 - Mentally instable
 - Transformed Russia into multi-ethnic country by conquest and expansion → 1 billion acres

History

- **Time of Troubles (1606-1613)**
 - No successor in place after Ivan IV died
 - Russia experienced:
 - Civil wars
 - Foreign invasions
 - Famines
 - Weak and ineffective rulers
 - Much territory lost
- Eventually Mikhail Romanov was chosen to be tsar. Romanov family would stay in power until 1917.